

Lead Tailings? ARCO Points To Kennecott

By Jim Woolf
THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

A hazardous-waste expert for Atlantic Richfield Co. has claimed that Kennecott and its predecessor companies mined and milled lead ore in Bingham Canyon.

If true, it means Kennecott could be required to pay a larger share of the multimillion-dollar cleanup of lead tailings that washed down Bingham Creek and contaminated yards in West Jordan.

"That's certainly news to us," said Robert A. Lonergan, vice president and general counsel for Kennecott. "We know of no lead tailings being put into that channel as a result of our operations."

Christiane C. Garlasco, coordinator for ARCO's waste-cleanup program, said in an interview Tuesday her company has submitted two reports to the Environmental Protection Agency identifying possible sources of the lead tailings.

She conceded that several of ARCO's predecessor companies mined and milled lead ore in Bingham Creek, but claimed the "vast majority" of their tailings were contained in a series of tailings ponds awaiting cleanup near Copperton.

ARCO understands it will be responsible for part of the cost of cleaning up Bingham Creek, she said.

But ARCO's reports to EPA claim Kennecott, through its predecessor companies, is also a possible source of the lead tailings. This claim contradicts Kennecott's repeated statements that it has never milled or concentrated lead ores in the Bingham Creek area.

ARCO's reports state: "Kennecott's predecessors had a long history of lead production in Bingham Canyon. Companies acquired by Boston Consolidated [a predecessor of Kennecott] mined and milled ores containing lead as early as 1882. Boston Consolidated mined lead prior to its acquisition by Utah Copper in 1910. Further, Shawmut Consolidated, which was 'absorbed' by Utah Copper in 1910, clearly mined and milled lead ores beginning in 1900. In addition, lead was

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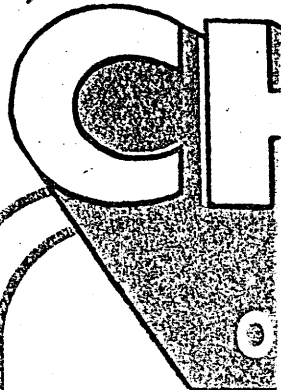
ARCO's research also identified American Smelting and Refining and UV Industries as having predecessor companies that contributed to the lead tailings in Bingham Canyon.

Mr. Lonergan had not seen ARCO's reports Tuesday, but he said Kennecott has spent thousands of hours studying the history of mining in Bingham Canyon and has found no evidence that a predecessor company "milled or concentrated" lead ore in Bingham Canyon.

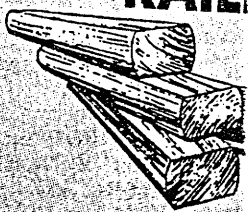
Kennecott's research indicates that one of ARCO's predecessor companies — Utah Apex — possibly dumped as much as a half-million tons of lead tailings into Bingham Creek between 1906 and 1917. Other material may have been washed off ARCO's tailings pile near Copperton.

"ARCO would like it [the lead tailings problem] to be our baby," said Mr. Lonergan. "But there is no question in my mind that ARCO bears a significantly larger portion of the responsibility than we do."

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